

X-671-64-334

N65-18190  
(ACCESSION NUMBER)  
22  
(PAGES)  
TMX-55149  
(NASA CR OR TMX OR AD NUMBER)

(THRU)  
7  
(CODE)  
08  
(CATEGORY)

NASA TMX-55149

# AVOIDING "BLACK BOX" COMPUTER PROGRAMS

BY  
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GPO PRICE \$  
OTS PRICE(S) \$  
Hard copy (HC) \$1.00  
Microfiche (MF) \$0.50

OCTOBER 1964



GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER  
GREENBELT, MARYLAND

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## SUMMARY

13190

Too many useful computer programs go the way of undocumented "black boxes" which are treacherous to run. A computer report format is set forth to salvage such programs with a minimum of effort. It is based on the "Liquan" program designed to analyze liquid-propellant rocket-engine static firing data. A feature to readily accommodate program expansion is also presented—the engineering analysis sequence pattern.

Author ↑

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## INTRODUCTION

No sooner does an engineering computer program become operational than the engineer-programmer team, responsible for the program's development, must seriously consider the need to document the effort which went into the program. To do otherwise is to risk the chameleon conversion of the new useful program into a treacherous "black box."

Yet, too often computer programs, once developed and checked out, are never documented or are not sufficiently well documented. Such programs run the risk of becoming "black boxes" if:

1. The original engineer-programmer team is not available for consultation.
2. Through the years, this original team has lost their intimate familiarity with the program's details.

Periodic critiques of "black box" programs can be undertaken only with great difficulty. Without the documented development effort available, updating the program becomes impossible.

The engineer-programmer team's interest, initially keen to develop a particular computer program to meet certain needs, often wanes once the program has been developed and attention shifts elsewhere to develop new programs.

"Black box" programs are treacherous to run because the original assumptions, unique conditions of the computation, and other program idiosyncrasies have become unknown "booby trap" quantities. The cost of operating such programs grows to include not only the actual computer time wasted but also the unwise expenditure of money on engineering designs which reflect an erroneous conception of the computer program employed.

Constructive critiques of "black box" programs are impossible and so is the possibility of updating these programs as new state-of-the-art techniques

are developed. A well-documented computer program reflects the developmental effort which went into the program, permits effective periodic critiques, and can readily accommodate new calculation methods.

The nature of the computer program documentation considered in this report differs from other similar reports (Ref. 1) in presenting a few features which should appeal more to the engineer collaborating with his technical writer-editor than to the programmer. The programmer, should he feel so inclined, might wish to prepare a computer flow chart (Ref. 1, p. 37), which is usually more comprehensible to programmers rather than engineers.

## PREFERABLE FORMATS

The need to establish a preferable format for a well-documented report on computer programs was first pointed out at the Ninth Meeting of the Working Group on Design Automation (Ref. 2, p. 24). Although there is nothing startling about the "Liquan" computer program documented in this report, it will serve mainly to present the essentials of this "preferable format." They include the following:

1. Computer program
2. Sequential engineering analyses
3. Decoding and worksheet
4. Typical input
5. An additional input format
6. Typical output

## SEQUENTIAL ENGINEERING ANALYSES

Although a copy of the computer program is presented in Appendix A, reference to the Sequential Engineering Analysis of Appendix B should more quickly familiarize the reader with the essence of the program. The equations presented are of general utility; but many of the constants, such as the 4.6 in the coefficient of thrust equation, refer specifically to the Aerobee 350 sounding rocket—in this case, the ratio of exit area to throat area of the nozzle. A subsequent follow-on program sought to empirically relate the  $C^*$  function in terms of mixture ratio and chamber pressure for later use in an associated propellant utilization program, for still subsequent use in a simple 2-D trajectory program.

A number of additional features present in Appendix A but not shown in Appendix B include:

1. TC — The time at which a particular chamber changes from step operation to full operation. This permits a change in the  $K_w$  values so that

the propellant flow is markedly increased. The step operation stage is employed to avoid the problem of feeding too much propellant into the chamber and igniting it after a significant ignition delay period. Were this to happen, the chamber would blow up.

2. TFIN and TFOUT — The fuel temperature, in and out of the cooling jacket, is averaged before its specific gravity is computed.
3. A CFA feature to throw out negative CFA values where the chamber pressure has not risen sufficiently to even reach the step operation stage.

These features have not been incorporated into the Sequential Engineering Analysis to keep it sufficiently simple for presentation in this report. However, these features (and others) would take their respective place in the analysis in a followup revision as part of the updating effort.

It can therefore be seen that, although Appendix B does not reflect every detail of the present program, it can nevertheless readily accommodate additions and deletions to the program and so grow in complexity but not in confusion.

Appendix B can also be used as a worksheet to jot down references in their appropriate place in the sequence for future inclusion of this matter into the program.

It also permits simpler constructive critique as nebulous areas arise or as the conditions, circumstances, and assumptions of the program computation change.

Appendix B also serves as a pivot point. Its analysis can be pivoted in the direction of any of the program languages—FORTRAN, MYSTIC, FORAST, etc. And, conversely, these computer languages can be translated back into the "engineering" language of Appendix B.

## DECODING WORKSHEET

The Fortran Decoding and Worksheet in Appendix C neatly ties together in one chart:

1. The input and output,
2. The engineering notation with dimensions employed in the Sequential Engineering Analysis,

3. The blank three columns of card numbers, column numbers, and typical values which may be used by the program operator in the manner of a worktable for better familiarization with the input of the program.

It may be appropriate to mention here with respect to engineering notation and FORTRAN that a step has been taken to standardize FORTRAN nomenclature as it pertains to solid rocket motor design (Ref. 3).

## DATA INPUT

The data input is presented in two forms: Appendixes D and E. The usual order of presentation is shown in the former and, in the latter, a new method associates the read input tape card with corresponding data. The latter appendix should reduce the time required to prepare new sets of data, especially since the data are aligned with the numbered columns at the bottom of the sheet. Another advantage of the Appendix E input is to eliminate costly errors which occur when misunderstandings arise over the data input. Too often, useless program runs are attempted, resulting in wasteful computer time expenditures and lost man-hours because of initial unfamiliarity with data input order.

Typical output is shown in Appendix F.

## FORMAT ADVANTAGES

With the above formats, less effort is required to document a particular computer program; and the computer report so prepared has the following advantages:

1. Presents a bird's-eye view of the calculation logic and flow.
2. Affords the opportunity to annotate the engineering analysis flow chart with:
  - (a) Assumptions,
  - (b) Unique conditions,
  - (c) Past and future applicable references.
3. Permits a fast periodic review of the program.

4. Involves a minimum of time and effort to familiarize, and refamiliarize oneself after a long lapse of time, with the program flow and data input.
5. Serves to expand the original program as the occasion arises.

## RECAPITULATION

This computer report then serves two purposes:

1. To provide the necessary information to utilize the "Liquan" computer program to ANALyze LIQUid (LIQU-AN) propellant rocket-engine static firing data.
2. To set forth a computer report format of general applicability which may differ markedly from typical computer program reports but which contains the minimum necessary essentials to adequately document a computer program, such as "Liquan."

## REFERENCES

1. Frankle, J. M., "The Effect of Distribution of Impulse on Range for a Gun-Boosted Rocket," BRL Memorandum Report No. 1548, February 1964, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.
2. Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting, Interagency Chemical Rocket Propulsion Working Group on Design Automation, CPIA Publication No. 55, August 1964, Chemical Propulsion Information Agency, The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, Silver Spring, Maryland.
3. Interagency Chemical Rocket Propulsion Working Group on Design Automation, "Computer Program Nomenclature Standardization," CPIA Publication No. 28, October 1963, Chemical Propulsion Information Agency, The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, Silver Spring, Maryland.



APPENDIX A

THE COMPUTER PROGRAM—LIQUAN

# Appendix A

## The Computer Program--Liquan

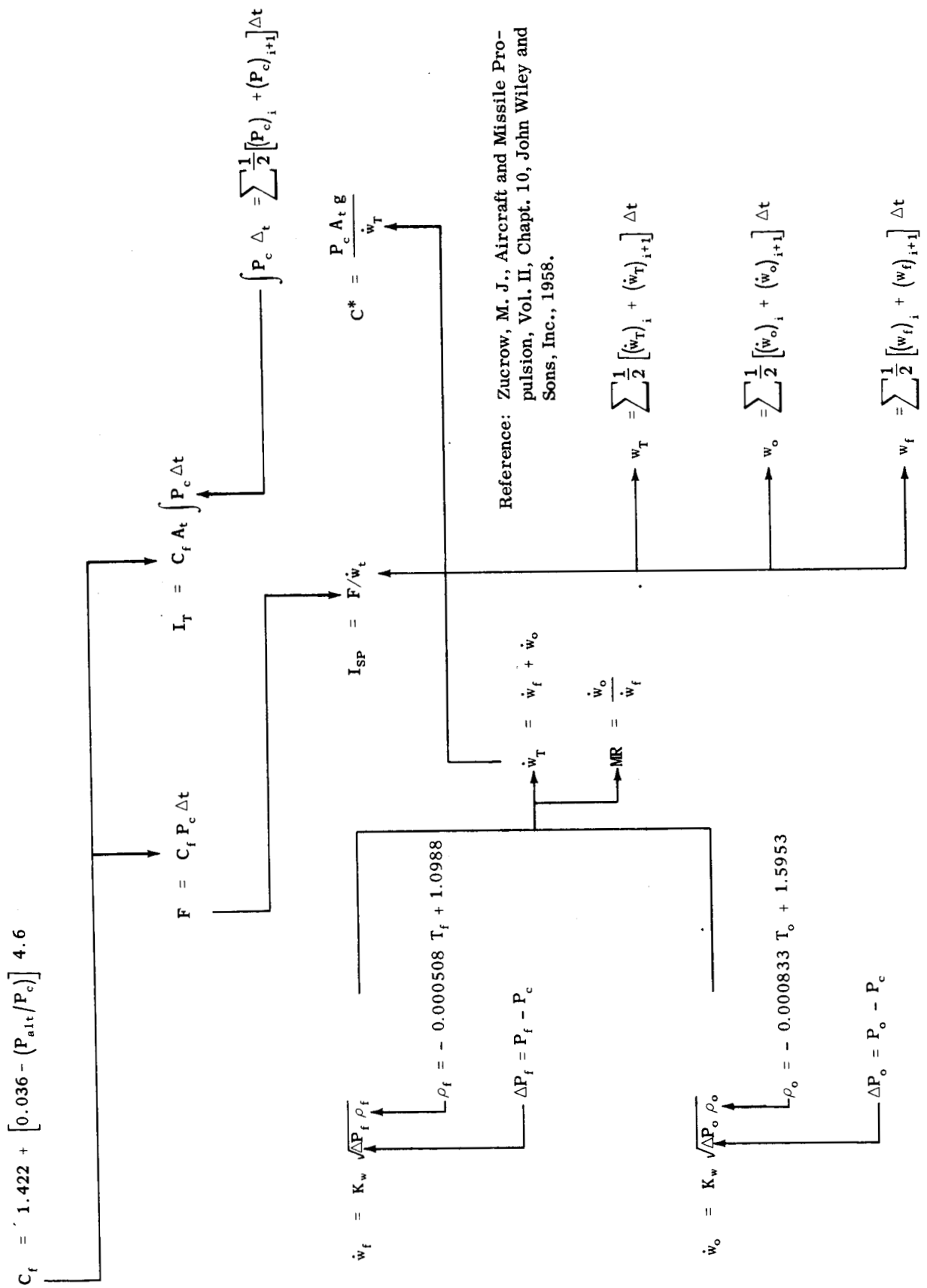
```

$JOB 1091C003 409HISLER, A.
$EXECUTE          FORTRA
*
*      XEQ
*      XEQ
*      LIST 8
*      LABEL
C LIQUAN-A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF LIQUID PROPELLANT ROCKET ENGINE
C          STATIC FIRING DATA-A.HISLER
C          DIMENSION PC(200),CFA(200),TIME(200),PCDT(200),PCG(200),SPGFA(200)
C          1,TFA(200),DPFA(200),PFJ(200),WDFFA(200),DPO(200),POJ(200),WDO(200),
C          2WDT(200),WDFDT(200),WDODT(200),WDTDT(200),DELT(200),AMR(200),PALT(
C          3200),FA(200),AISP(200),CSTAR(200),TFIN(200),TFOUT(200)
10 AIT=0.0
    TWDTDT=0.0
    TWDODT=0.0
    TWDFDT=0.0
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,1,IA,IB,IC,ID,IE
    1 FORMAT(14,4I2)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,2,AT,TO,AKWFA,AKWO,TKWFA,TKWO,TC
    2 FORMAT(7F10,4)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,14,G
14 FORMAT(F10,4)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(TIME(I), I=1,IA)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(TFIN(I),I=1,IA)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(TFOUT(I),I=1,IA)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(PFJ(I), I=1,IA)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(POJ(I), I=1,IA)
    READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(PCG(I),I=1,IA)
    3 FORMAT(7F10,4)
    SPGO=-0.000833*TO+1.5953
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,36
36 FORMAT(1H1)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,47
47 FORMAT(49H WATER CONSTANTS THROAT AREA G-VALUE OXIDIZER/51H
1FUEL OXIDIZER TEMPERATURE)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,4,AKWFA,AKWO,AT,G,TO
    4 FORMAT(5F10,4)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,15
15 FORMAT(1H0)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,8
    8 FORMAT(1H0/105H          FLOW RATE          MIXTURE
    1 CF THRUST SPECIFIC CSTAR CHAMBER/116H OXID
    2IZER FUEL TOTAL RATIO
    3 IMPULSE PRESSURE TIME)
    DO 11 I=1,IA
    TFA(I)=0.5*(TFIN(I)+TFOUT(I))
    SPGFA(I)=-0.000508*TFA(I)+1.0988
    DPFA(I)=PFJ(I)-PCG(I)
    DPO(I)=POJ(I)-PCG(I)
    IF (PCG(I)) 81,81,82
81 PC(I)=0.0
    GO TO 83
82 PC(I)=PCG(I)+14.7
83 GO TO (7,5),IB
    7 READ INPUT TAPE 2,2,(PALT(J), J=1,IA)
    6 CFA(I)=1.422+(0.036-(PALT(I)/PC(I)))*4.6
    GO TO 12
    5 CFA(I)=1.422+(0.036-14.7/PC(I))*4.6
    IF(CFA(I)) 21,12,12
21 CFA(I)=0.0
12 FA(I)=CFA(I)*AT*PC(I)
    IF(TIME(I)-TC) 70,60,60
70 WDFFA(I)=TKWFA*SQRTE(DPFA(I)*SPGFA(I))
    WDO(I)=TKWO*SQRTE(DPO(I)*SPGO)
    GO TO 80
60 WDFFA(I)=AKWFA*SQRTE(DPFA(I)*SPGFA(I))
    WDO(I)= AKWO*SQRTE(DPO(I)*SPGO)
80 WDT(I)=WDFFA(I)+WDO(I)
    AMR(I)=WDO(I)/WDFFA(I)
    AISP(I)=FA(I)/WDT(I)
    CSTAR(I) =(PC(I)*AT*G)/WDT(I)
11 WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,9,WDO(I),WDFFA(I),WDT(I),AMR(I),CFA(I),FA(I),AI
1ISP(I),CSTAR(I),PC(I),TIME(I)
    9 FORMAT(F10,4,2F12,4,F10,4,F12,4,F14,4,3F12,4,F11,4)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,15
    IA1=IA-1
    DO 50 I=1,IA1
    DELT(I)=TIME(I+1)-TIME(I)
    CALL TRAPI(PC(I+1),PC(I),DELT(I),PCDT(I))
    AIT=AIT+CFA(I)*AT*PCDT(I)
    CALL TRAPI(WDO(I+1),WDO(I),DELT(I),WDODT(I))
    TWDOTDT=TWDODT+WDODT(I)
    CALL TRAPI(WDFFA(I+1),WDFFA(I),DELT(I),WDFDT(I))
    TWDFDT=TWDFDT+WDFDT(I)
    CALL TRAPI(WDT(I+1),WDT(I),DELT(I),WDTDT(I))
    TWDTDT=TWDTDT+WDTDT(I)
50 WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,41,IC
41 FORMAT(30H 350 AEROBEE STATIC FIRING NO 12)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,42,ID
42 FORMAT(24H 350 AEROBEE CHAMBER NO 12)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,43,IE
43 FORMAT(33H AEROBEE PRESSURE DROP SYSTEM NO 12)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,44
44 FORMAT(39H AEROBEE 350 PRESSURE DROP SYSTEM CODE/33H NO 1-INJ
1ECTION PRESSURE DROP/38H NO 2-TANK PRESSURE DROP
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,15
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,13,AIT
13 FORMAT(37H THE TOTAL IMPULSE OF THIS CHAMBER = F10,2)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,16,TWDFDT
16 FORMAT(36H THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF FUEL FLOWED IS F10,4)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,17,TWDODT
17 FORMAT(40H THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF OXIDIZER FLOWED IS F10,4)
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,18,TWDTDT
18 FORMAT(42H THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF PROPELLANT FLOWED IS F10,4)
    TOTP=TWDFDT + TWDODT
    WRITE OUTPUT TAPE 3,19,TOTP
19 FORMAT(53H THE COMBINED FUEL AND OXIDIZER PROPELLANT FLOWED IS F10
1,4)
    GO TO 10
    END
*      LIST 8
*      LABEL
C TRAPEZOIDAL INTEGRATION
    SUBROUTINE TRAPI(B,C,D,A)
    A=(B+C)*0.5*D
    RETURN
    END

```

## Appendix B

### Sequential Engineering Analysis



# Appendix C

## Fortran Decoding and Worksheet

Fortran Code			Notation	Definition	Card No.	Column Nos.	Dimension	Typical Value
In	Neither	Out						
		AMR		Mixture ratio				
		AISP	$I_{SP}$	Specific impulse			lb/(lb/sec)	
		AIT	$I_T$	Total impulse			lb sec	
AT			$A_t$	Area of thrust cross section of discharge nozzle			in. <sup>2</sup>	
AKWFA			$(k_w)_f$	Water flow constant for fuel system—steady state				
AKWO			$(k_w)_o$	Water flow constant for oxidizer system—steady state				
		CFA	$C_F$	Thrust coefficient = $F/A_t P_c$				
		CSTAR	$C^*$	Characteristic velocity for rocket motor			ft/sec	
	DPFA		$\Delta P_f$	Pressure differential across fuel system			psi	
	DPO		$\Delta P_o$	Pressure differential across oxidizer system			psi	
	DELT		$\Delta t$	Time interval			sec	
		FA	$F$	Thrust			lb	
G			$g$	Acceleration due to gravity				
IA				No. of data points				
IB				Do either statement 7(1) or 5(2)				
IC				Firing no.				
ID				Chamber no.				
IE				Pressure drop system no.				
	IA1			No. of data points - 1			psia	
		PC	$P_c$	Chamber pressure, absolute				
	PCDT		$P_c \Delta t$	Chamber pressure time integral				
PCG			$P_{cg}$	Chamber pressure, gage			psig	
PFJ			$P_{fj}$	Fuel injection pressure				
POJ			$P_{oj}$	Oxidizer injection pressure				
PACT			$P_{alt}$	Pressure at altitude				
	SPGFA		$\rho_f$	Specific gravity of fuel				
	SPGO		$\rho_o$	Specific gravity of oxidizer				
TIME			$t$	Time				
	TFA		$T_f$	Temperature of fuel, average			°F	
TFIN			$T_{fi}$	Incoming temperature of fuel			°F	
TFOUT			$T_{fo}$	Exit temperature of fuel			°F	
	TWDTDT			Total flow rate-time integral				
	TWDDOT			Total oxidizer flow rate-time integral				
	TWDFDT			Total fuel flow rate-time integral				
TO			$T_o$	Oxidizer temperature, average			°F	
TKWFA				Initial transient fuel water flow constant				
TKWO				Initial transient oxidizer water flow constant				
TC			$t_c$	Time of propellant full flow				
	WDFA		$\dot{w}_f$	Fuel flow rate			lb/sec	
	WDO		$\dot{w}_o$	Oxidizer flow rate			lb/sec	
	WDT		$\dot{w}_T$	Total propellant flow rate			lb/sec	
	WDFDT			Fuel flow rate-time integrals				
	WDODT			Oxidizer flow rate-time integrals				
	WDTDT			Propellant's flow rate-time integrals				

# Appendix D

## Typical Data Input

* DATA	17	2	3	1	1	91.0	0.503	1.38	0.146	0.412	1.581
9.208											
32.2											
1.414						1.504	1.645	1.811	2.029	3.065	4.064
53.011						53.203	53.408	53.600	53.805	54.010	54.509
55.008						55.405	55.815				
79.479						79.034	79.523	80.057	77.877	108.032	163.912
230.587						239.253	244.973	247.919	236.220	227.554	500.256
196.474						190.460	181.868				
79.479						79.034	79.523	80.057	77.877	108.032	163.912
236.567						231.887	231.887	233.880	232.754	231.454	230.587
196.474						190.460	181.868				
412.672						427.755	375.817	386.541	387.819	385.166	387.268
356.015						335.425	309.990	301.264	326.630	290.282	232.298
190.961						165.750	146.717				
33.358						106.196	353.787	359.720	367.686	363.893	362.144
386.636						381.887	384.386	385.086	370.791	381.287	382.587
374.290						370.591	375.239	372.170	359.725	357.876	356.121
.119						68.535	290.466	297.122	301.264	296.048	296.398
288.233						251.607	203.832	105.293	14.638	11.751	2.743
1.350						.469	.443				

# Appendix E

## An Additional Data Input Format

```

*      DATA
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,1,IA,IB,IC,ID,IE
      17 2 3 1 1
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,2,AT,TO,AKWFA,AKWO,TKWFA,TKWO,TC
      9.208 91.0 0.503 1.38 0.146 0.412 1.581
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,14,G
      32.2
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(TIME(I), I=1,IA)
      53.011 53.203 53.408 53.600 53.805 54.010 54.509
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(TFIN(I),I=1,IA)
      230.587 239.253 244.973 247.919 236.220 227.554 500.256
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(TFOUT(I),I=1,IA)
      236.567 231.887 231.887 233.880 232.754 231.454 230.587
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(PFJ(I), I=1,IA)
      356.015 335.425 309.990 301.264 326.630 290.282 232.298
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(POJ(I), I=1,IA)
      386.636 381.887 384.386 385.086 370.791 381.287 382.587
      READ INPUT TAPE 2,3,(PCG(I),I=1,IA)
      288.233 251.607 203.832 105.293 14.638 .11.751 2.743

1234567890
1-1234567890
2-1234567890
3-1234567890
4-1234567890
5-1234567890
6-1234567890

```

# Appendix F

## Typical Data Output

WATER CONSTANTS THROAT AREA G-VALUE OXIDIZER  
FUEL OXIDIZER 1.3800 9.2080 42.2000 91.0000  
0.5030

OXIDIZER	FLOW RATE	TOTAL	MIXTURE	CF	THRUST	SPECIFIC IMPULSE	CSTAR	CHAMBER PRESSURE	TIME
2.9280	3.0509	5.9789	0.9597	0.	0.	0.	734.8885	14.8190	1.4140
3.1167	2.0471	5.9638	1.0947	0.7752	594.1359	99.6232	4138.1086	83.2350	1.5040
13.5364	4.7808	18.3172	2.8314	1.3660	3838.4609	209.5555	4939.6844	305.1660	1.6450
13.4589	4.0927	18.3516	2.7508	1.3707	3935.7625	214.4639	5037.9420	311.8220	1.8110
13.8639	4.8163	18.6802	2.8786	1.3736	3996.3122	213.9336	5015.0845	315.9640	2.0290
14.0116	4.8516	18.8632	2.8680	1.3700	3920.0620	207.8153	4884.4332	310.7480	3.0650
13.7932	4.8320	18.6251	2.8546	1.3702	3925.1786	210.7463	4952.4363	311.0980	4.0640
16.8746	4.0999	20.9745	4.1159	1.3644	3805.8175	181.4501	4282.2996	302.9330	53.0110
19.4164	4.5568	23.9731	4.2610	1.3337	3270.3959	136.4192	3293.6617	266.3070	53.2030
22.8577	5.1244	27.9821	4.4606	1.2782	2571.9914	91.9156	2315.5600	218.5320	53.4080
28.4543	6.9580	35.4122	4.0894	1.0241	1131.4872	31.9519	1004.6705	119.9930	53.6000
32.1031	8.7939	40.8970	3.6506	0.	0.	0.	212.6963	29.3380	53.8050
32.7007	8.5197	41.0204	3.9305	0.	0.	0.	191.1891	26.4510	54.0100
33.1537	7.2826	40.4363	4.5525	0.	0.	0.	127.9002	17.4430	54.5090
32.8510	6.9228	39.7738	4.7453	0.	0.	0.	119.6463	16.0500	55.0080
32.7266	6.4733	39.1999	5.0557	0.	0.	0.	114.7343	15.1690	55.4050
32.9326	6.1029	39.0350	5.3962	0.	0.	0.	115.0198	15.1430	55.8150

350 AERObEE STATIC FIRING NO 3  
350 AERObEE CHAMBER NO 1  
AERObEE PRESSURE DROP SYSTEM NO 1  
AERObEE 350 PRESSURE DROP SYSTEM CODE  
NO 1-INJECTION PRESSURE DROP  
NO 2-TANK PRESSURE DROP

THE TOTAL IMPULS OF THIS CHAMBER = 201155.76  
THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF FUEL FLOWED IS 250.1291  
THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF OXIDIZER FLOWED IS 870.5084  
THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF PROPELLANT FLOWED IS 1170.6375  
THE COMBINED FUEL AND OXIDIZER PROPELLANT FLOWED IS 1120.6375